

In the days and weeks ahead, we will intensify our cooperation with Russian authorities to help prevent terrorist acts. The struggle against terrorism is a long and difficult road, but we must not lose our resolve. America stands ready to work with Russia to protect our citizens from this common threat.

NOTE: In this statement, the President referred to President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Statement on the Common Ground Partnerships Initiative

September 17, 1999

Today, as we celebrate Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, thousands of individuals in naturalization ceremonies across America are pledging their allegiance to the United States and to the ideals that undergird our Nation. Like generations of immigrants past, they are driven by a dream—and to achieve that dream, they seek to learn the ways of this land. I believe we can help these new citizens become full participants in American society. That is why my administration has proposed the creation of the Common Ground Partnerships, an innovative initiative that would combine expanded English language instruction with education in civics and life skills. This initiative, which my FY 2000 budget funds at \$70 million, will help ensure that those who become Americans learn not only the words of the citizenship oath but also the broader language of our civic life. I hope that Members of Congress from both parties will recognize the power of this important initiative to build a stronger American community.

Statement on Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

September 17, 1999

I am pleased that the House of Representatives will have an opportunity in just a few weeks to vote on a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. This will, at long last, give Members of Congress an opportunity to put patients' interests ahead of the special interests.

A bipartisan majority of the House has already expressed support for the Norwood-Dingell proposal, a plan that would provide for an enforceable set of meaningful patient protections that would be extended to all Americans in all health plans. I am confident that the Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights will be adopted, if the House leadership permits a fair process for debating and voting on this important issue.

Message on the Observance of Yom Kippur, 1999

September 17, 1999

I am pleased to send warm greetings to all those observing Yom Kippur.

On this most solemn of holy days, Jews across our nation and around the world prepare for the new year through fasting, prayer, and quiet reflection. Examining their thoughts, words, and deeds of the past year, they strive to acknowledge and learn from their transgressions, seek forgiveness from those whom they may have offended, and ask for God's mercy.

This Day of Atonement can offer a powerful lesson to people of all faiths about the true spirit of reconciliation and the unconditional love of God. It can teach us not only to face our own failures, but also to love and forgive one another as God loves and forgives us. As the Jewish people set aside this time to repair their relationships and renew their souls, let us all vow to work together to heal divisions, promote tolerance and understanding, and share the blessings of peace in the year to come.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a meaningful Yom Kippur.

Bill Clinton

Proclamation 7223—Ovarian Cancer Awareness Week, 1999

September 17, 1999

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Ovarian cancer is a devastating disease that takes the lives of thousands of women in our

Nation each year. Since 1985, there has been a dramatic increase in the incidence of ovarian cancer, with a 30 percent increase in the number of women diagnosed with the disease and an 18 percent increase in the number of fatalities. Ovarian cancer is particularly deadly, killing nearly 15,000 women each year. It is often not diagnosed until the cancer is in the late states of development, limiting the effectiveness of treatment and reducing the chances of survival. In its late stages, the chances of survival from ovarian cancer are just 25 percent; when it is detected early, before the cancer spreads, the survival rate exceeds 90 percent.

Our most effective weapon in the battle against ovarian cancer is early detection. Subtle but recognizable symptoms, such as bloating, vague abdominal pain and discomfort, gastrointestinal problems, back pain, and fatigue can also be symptoms of other less serious illnesses, but women who are experiencing such early warning signs should consult their doctors immediately for appropriate tests.

Doctors and researchers have identified factors that put women at higher risk of developing ovarian cancer, including a family history of breast and ovarian cancer, a high fat diet, never having had children, or infertility. It is vital that women learn about risk factors and visit their doctors regularly.

As we observe Ovarian Cancer Awareness Week, let us build on our efforts to eradicate this serious disease and urge all American women and their families to learn more about ovarian cancer, its symptoms, and available methods that may reduce the risk of developing it. By increasing awareness of early warning signs and risk factors, maintaining a healthy diet, and consulting regularly with health care professionals, women across America can lead healthier and longer lives and help our Nation win the fight against ovarian cancer.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 19 through September 25, 1999, as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Week. I encourage the

American people to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 20, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 21.

Memorandum on Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by Hurricane Floyd

September 17, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by Hurricane Floyd

I am deeply concerned about the devastating losses suffered by many as a result of Hurricane Floyd. Many parts of the Federal Government have been mobilized to respond to this disaster.

As part of this effort, I ask the heads of executive departments and agencies to excuse from duty without charge to leave or loss of pay those Federal civilian employees who are affected by Hurricane Floyd and its aftermath and who can be spared from their usual responsibilities. Specifically, I request that excused absence be granted to employees who are needed for emergency law enforcement, relief, or clean-up efforts authorized by Federal, State, or other officials having jurisdiction and employees who are prevented from reporting for work or faced with a personal emergency because of Hurricane Floyd and its aftermath.

I am also authorizing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to determine whether there is a need to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by this major disaster. An emergency leave transfer program would permit employees in an executive agency to